

REFLECTIVE WRITING

An expression of a student's response to an experience

Purpose:

Provides access to student expectations, perceptions, feelings and reactions
Provides a means to link experience with learning
Provides a means for students to construct their own meaning from learning experiences
Provides a means to focus on the affective learning domain

Uses:

At the beginning of class to allow students to formulate their expectations
At any point in the class to allow students to construct meaning from experiences
During and after experiential learning opportunities to integrate the experiences and the course or program content

Method:

Provide students with a format for the reflective writing (example follows)

Introduction: The introduction is a retelling of what happened. The introductory paragraph "sets the scene" by giving factual information.

Body: State what you expected or anticipated about the experience. What did you actually experience, feel, observe, etc.? Be specific. Use "I" statements. Include all features or elements that would allow an outsider to "see as you see" whatever you experienced. Analysis deals with reasons, motives, and interpretation during the event or experience. How is the evidence meaningful or how does it contribute to your understanding of course content?

Closure: State how the experience has impacted you. How will this impact you in the future?

Results:

Student reflections can reveal concerns and/or areas in which students are confident of their abilities.

Next Steps:

Determine appropriate teaching technique responses to results.

Future Steps:

Keep records of results for use with student, course, and program assessments
Course or program review: Compare results from classroom assessments of major concepts with other instructors.